

## Appeal of *This Affects You Too* campaign to political parties to start a dialogue and reach an agreement

“*This Affects You Too*” campaign responds to the recent initiative on establishing rules of conduct for political parties in the election period. We consider that the current events concerning the election environment have lately become quite disturbing thus posing danger to conducting elections in a peaceful and just atmosphere. The responsibility for diffusing the existing tension and establishing public confidence towards the process goes both to the authorities and the political parties.

We deem it necessary that political parties reach a certain agreement in order to ensure a just, competitive, and peaceful election process. At the same time, however, it is essential that the agreement principles were not dictated by one only political force but rather be the subject of a real agreement between parties.

In our understanding, the principles suggested by the United National Movement are not sufficient and enough for the genuine recovery of the process. Both the authorities and the political parties should assume a greater responsibility and reach an agreement on additional important themes concerning the election environment.

We- the nongovernmental organizations observing the elections, hold it important that all parties involved in the election process come to an agreement regarding the following principles:

### **Political parties:**

- Shall not allow or encourage their supporters to carry out destructive actions. Parties’ activists shall conduct the campaign within the framework of political ethics and take appropriate measures against the violators of those rules;
- Shall ensure that the society and the relevant agencies are given an advance notice on the activities planned by their parties;
- Shall prevent any interference in or attempt to discredit the activities of the impartial observer organizations;
- Shall not bribe voters and adhere to pertinent legislative requirements;
- Shall prevent abuse of administrative resources including budgetary resources through the use of the public sector employees and the authority concentrated in the state agencies;
- Shall promote the establishment of high political culture and emphasize thematic political debates at the utmost extent, and by doing so give the society an opportunity to make an informed choice;
- The political forces shall not allow for the encouragement of aggression and violence on the day of elections, including through prior to elections mobilization of their supporters, which may lead to certain disorders and destabilization on the election day;
- Shall ensure that all media outlets have equal working conditions at events organized by them, prevent any acts of pressurizing journalists and hindering their activities;
- Shall prevent abusing media outlets for campaigning purposes or for misinforming the public, and shall facilitate defusing tensions and controversies between different media outlets.

**State agencies:**

- Shall act only in accordance with the requirements of the law and in full compliance of political neutrality;
- Shall ensure equal and just approach to different political entities ;
- Shall not allow for selective application of law or discriminatory approach;
- The state Audit Service shall ensure the implementation of its functions under the legislation in such a way as to avoid discriminatory restrictions imposed on the financial activities of certain political parties ;
- The State Audit Service and the investigative bodies shall place a greater emphasis on the prevention of violations rather than the punishment of offenders;
- The State Audit Service shall facilitate the parties to implement the laws including through preliminary advising especially in terms of receiving funding;
- Shall prevent any attempts of disrupting the work of journalists, and ensure equal working conditions for all registered media representatives at state and local government as well as public events;
- Shall ensure the public access to diverse information in all possible and lawful manner, which also implies unrestricted access to different TV channels on the day of elections as well as the subsequent period.

Guided by both public and state interests and acknowledging the significance of conducting peaceful and just elections, we consider it important to have an agreement reached regarding the above issues in a timely manner and with the maximum involvement of the parties concerned.

On our part, we express our readiness to contribute to the dialogue between parties covering the above issues.